

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 H-02 PRS-01 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 /049 W

----- 065587

O R 230450Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5133

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 2005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SN

SUBJECT: US-SINGAPORE SECURITY COOPERATION

REFS: A) STATE 094136; B) SINGAPORE 1400 (NOTAL)

1. AFTER SEEING OFF SECRETARY BUTZ AT AIRPORT APRIL 23, I ENCOUNTERED GOS MINDEF PERMANENT SECRETARY PANG TEE POW, WHO TOOK ME ASIDE AT VIP ROOM TO TALK ABOUT US-SINGAPORE SECURITY COOPERATION. PANG SAID HE HAD BEEN DISCUSSING QUESTION OF PORT FEES AT SEMBAWANG BERTHS 6 AND 7 WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY, AS A RESULT OF WHICH HE WANTED TO ASK ME IF A WAY MIGHT BE FOUND TO REDUCE COSTS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE TO THE "NOMINAL FIGURE" ORIGINALLY PROPOSED TO PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW. IF THIS COULD BE DONE, PANG SAID, SINGAPORE WOULD FORGET ABOUT CHARGING PORT FEES FOR USE OF BERTHS 6 AND 7.

2. I TOLD PANG THAT I WOULD OF COURSE REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO WASHINGTON ON THIS MATTER. I POINTED OUT, THOUGH, THAT PROBLEM INVOLVED CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION AND RESTRICTIONS WERE SUCH THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT COST REDUCTION WITH RESPECT TO COUNTER-INSURGENCY COURSE. NEVERTHELESS, I HOPED THAT WAYS MIGHT BE FOUND IN OTHER ASPECTS OF US-GOS MILITARY

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RELATIONSHIP TO REDUCE EFFECTS OF CHARGES FOR COUNTER-

INSURGENCY COURSE. OUR INTENT, I SAID, WAS TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLIEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH GOS ON MATTERS INVOLVING OUR MILITARY COOPERATION.

3. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR TO ME THAT GOS IS NOW THINKING TWICE ABOUT IMPOSING PORT CHARGES FOR OUR USE OF BERTHS 6 AND 7 AND WOULD LIKE TO GET BACK TO THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WHICH WE ENJOYED PRIOR TO THE TIME WHEN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE BECAME AN ISSUE. THE PROBLEM IS THAT PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW'S PRESTIGE IS PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER -- IT IS NOT SOMETHING WHICH AROSE AT BUREAUCRATIC LEVELS BELOW THE PM, AS SUGGESTED IN REFTEL A--AND SOME WAY WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND TO SAVE THE PM'S FACE. I RECOMMEND THAT IF NO FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS CAN BE MADE IN COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE COSTS, WE LOOK INTO WAYS AND MEANS TO BE HELPFUL TO SINGAPORE WITH RESPECT TO CHARGES ON OTHER ITEMS WHICH THEY DESIRE, E.G. A-4 TRAINING IN THE PHILIPPINES. WE SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, APPROACH THIS ON A STRICT DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR QUID PRO QUO BASIS, BUT IN THE SPIRIT OF MAITY AND COOPERATION. AS STATED IN REFTEL A, A COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP WILL SIMPLY NOT BE ADEQUATE

4. INCIDENTALLY, DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL I MADE POINT VERY STRONGLY IN MY CONVERSATION WITH PANG TEE POW (REFTEL B) ON MARCH 23 REGARDING PORT CHARGES FOR BERTHS 6 AND 7, THAT SINGAPORE WAS RECEIVING FAIR VALUE FOR MILITARY TRAINING RECEIVED BY ITS PERSONNEL FROM THE U.S. I BELIEVE THAT GOS UNDERSTANDS THIS POINT, AND THAT THIS MAY BE ONE REASON WHY IT WOULD LIKE TO BACK AWAY FROM IMPOSITION OF PORT CHARGES. HOWEVER, A WAY STILL NEEDS TO BE FOUND TO ASSUAGE PM LEE OVER THE COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE ISSUE.

5. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO EMBASSY MANILA AND CINCPAC.
HOLDRIDGE

SECRET

NNN

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